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МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ АМНИСТИЯ
منظمة العفو الدولية
國際特赦組織

URGENT ACTION

EXTERNAL **AI Index: ASA 21/08/96**

EXTRA 12/96 **Fear for safety** **30 January 1996**

EAST TIMOR **Prisoners in Becora Prison, Dili**

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of prisoners in Becora Prison, Dili, the capital of East Timor, after a prison riot during which one prisoner was shot dead.

The riot is believed to have begun around 8am on 30 January, but there are conflicting reports about its cause. Initially the authorities stated that the riots were caused by "a misunderstanding" between the prisoners and officials when prisoners from one block wanted to gain access to another block. However, the authorities apparently later stated that the riot was a result of an escape attempt by 10 prisoners, two of whom had already been caught. The authorities are reported to have claimed that the remaining eight have not yet been recaptured.

It is believed that up to 40 people, including six prison guards, were wounded during the riot, nine seriously. Eight of the wounded are believed to be in the prison health clinic while another six have been transferred to hospital. It is not clear how the injuries occurred, although it is known that the riot police, brought in to quell the riot, used tear gas.

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of the prisoners considered to be the ringleaders of the riot and those caught after allegedly attempting to escape. Political and criminal detainees are frequently tortured in Indonesia and East Timor, and Amnesty International is urging that any actions taken by the authorities in investigating the riots and alleged escape attempt do not result in torture or ill-treatment.
Police authorities have admitted that one prison inmate, Armindo Soares, was shot dead by riot police, allegedly as he attempted to steal a police weapon. The authorities stated that warning shots were fired but that these were ignored by the prisoner. Given a pattern of police killings of criminals in suspicious circumstances in Indonesia, Amnesty International is urging the authorities to ensure that there be an independent and full investigation of the shooting.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Dili's Becora prison holds around 200 political and criminal detainees. Both political and criminal detainees are at risk of torture and ill-treatment in police and military detention, although the risk of such treatment is significantly lower once detainees are transferred to prisons. Human rights monitors and foreign journalists are currently being denied access to East Timor, occupied by Indonesia since 1975.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/express/airmail letters in Bahasa Indonesia or English or your own language:
- urging the authorities to launch an independent and full inquiry into the shooting of Armindo Soares;
- urging the authorities to ensure that any prisoner to be questioned concerning the riot and the alleged escape attempt is provided with full access to independent legal counsel and representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC);
- seeking assurances that none of the prisoners in Becora prison will be subjected to any form of torture or ill-treatment.

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APPEALS TO:

CHIEF OF POLICE FOR EAST TIMOR
Lt. Col. Andreas Sugianto
Kapolda Timor Timur
Dili
East Timor
(Indonesia)
Telegrams: Kapolda, Dili, East Timor
Salutation: Dear Lt. Col. Andreas Sugianto

COPIES TO:

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
Ali Alatas S.H.
Menteri Luar Negeri
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and to diplomatic representatives of East Timor accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 5 March 1996.